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AN ESSAY

ON

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

BISHOP BUTLER.

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## AN ESSAY, &c.

WHEN persons think or speak of "Bishop Butler," they do not mean, commonly, a living breathing man, but only a kind of abstraction. They have in their mind's eye the Analogy and Sermons; or rather, the mighty intellect that everywhere shines through them. Some, it is true, go further, and with a laudable curiosity, seek to know something of *the man himself*? believing, and very justly, that an author and his works reflect a mutual light upon each other. But, where may such inquirers find the desired information? There is a short Memoir, ascribed to Dr. Kippis, which is prefixed to nearly all the editions of Butler. This, however, is very brief and meagre, the merest sketch of his outward history; not a hue or a word relates to his inner being, to the workings of his mind, or the movement of his affections. And yet, this is all that most students know, of him who was England's most profound Philosopher, and among the number of her most Catholic divines; whose writings were well known and appreciated in his life-time; who occupied successively two bishoprics; and whose death occurred but a single century ago! Whilst Hooker, and Donne, and Herbert, and other worthies of a remoter age, have a sort of flesh-and-blood reality in the portraits of Walton; and whilst Dr. Johnson, who flourished but a few years later than Butler, has still an almost contemporary freshness; the great Author of the Analogy flits before us only in dim outline, his personal traits unknown, and everything about him shadowy and unreal.

We naturally ask, Why is this? Have the materials for a good biography been suffered to be lost, so that it is now impossible to repair the evil: or, can it be, that such materials are indeed still extant, yet, in this age of authorship, no pen has been found to write a complete and worthy memorial of so illustrious a thinker? Of these two suppositions, the former perhaps comes nearest to the truth. This opinion rests chiefly on the fact, that within a recent period; there has been published by Mr. Bartlett, (a clergyman of the Church of England, a kinsman of the great prelate, and one who evidently took much pains to make an interesting book) a large biography of Butler,\* in which very little in the way of new or curious information has been brought to light. This author's researches, however, have, now and then, hit upon some anecdote or incident in the life of the bishop that was not previously known. Most of his new matter is provokingly vague and tantalizing, it is true; yet it may perhaps be sufficiently tangible, in the absence of better material, to enable us, with a few hints from other sources, and an occasional reference to his works, to draw a more distinct picture of the Author of the Analogy than any within reach of the majority of readers.

Why it is, that so few materials for a biography of Butler have come down to us, may partly be explained by the fact that, having never married, he left none of those more immediate relatives who, of all persons, are best qualified and most careful to preserve the domestic traits and private history of a public man. This, however, it may be said, is no excuse for the neglect of his chaplains and other associates, who have

\* "Memoirs of the Life, Character, and Writings of Joseph Butler, D. C. L., late Lord Bishop of Durham. By Thomas Bartlett, A. M., &c., &c. London: John W. Parker, 1839, 1 vol. octavo, pp. 536.

kept back from posterity what is now probably past recovery. But, we suspect, the true reason why they have left us nothing is, that if they had tried to describe him, there would have been very little to tell. Butler was a reserved, thoughtful, and very diffident man, and had perhaps as few salient points of character as any great writer that has ever lived. He had devoted himself, when little more than a boy, to the pursuit of Truth as the great business of his life; and with a wonderful constancy he adhered to that resolution. His great power lies in a capacity for deep and far-reaching meditations, which he was always careful to put forth with the needful qualifications and restrictions. Hence, he was not likely to be a brilliant converser, as Johnson was. To be startling and paradoxical in his talk, was a thing very far from the tastes and inclinations of Bishop Butler. He would have judged it a sort of irreverent trifling, to state half-truths in order to arrest attention; or to utter a paradox that should make men stare, by exhibiting one side of a mystery, unbalanced by its proper counterpart. We have therefore abundant reason for supposing that there was nothing very dramatic or striking in his ordinary conversation. Indeed, the good Bishop seems to have been a quiet man, from principle as well as inclination: for, in the only instance in which he departs from the unimpassioned character of a philosopher, and assumes that of a keen satirist, which is in his sermon on the "Government of the Tongue," he depicts the great talker with so caustic a pencil, and describes so feelingly the annoyance such a one gives to "persons who love fewer words," "an inoffensive sort of people," who "deserve some regard, though of still and composed tempers,"—that we cannot help believing he was, in the latter class, tracing out, though perhaps unconsciously, a portrait of himself.

If our supposition above-named be correct, the whole mystery is nearly solved; and the only remaining wonder is, why we have not some of the Bishop's familiar letters; and other papers, which might furnish a clue to the secrets of his character. The works of our author, published in his lifetime, have attained to so high a rank in English Literature, that the question has often been asked, why more of his productions have not been given to the world since his death; especially sermons, of which, it is thought, he must have left a number. And, the desire to see more of these, is not a little heightened by what is mentioned in his Preface to "Sermons at the Rolls," viz: that "their being taken from amongst many others, preached at the same place, through a course of eight years, was in great measure accidental." This statement has caused an anxious longing in more than one admirer of Bishop Butler, to see some of those "many discourses," so much like the published ones that their author judged them of about equal merit. What then has become of those precious manuscripts? May there not be, somewhere, buried amidst the lumber of an English garret, a rich mine for the antiquarian yet to hit upon, that will give us more of Butler's invaluable sermons, and perchance a Private Diary showing each day's growth of the Analogy—a record which would be indeed a treasure in psychology! It would be a pleasure to think this possible; and it is cruel to dispel so bright a vision. But, the probability, is, that nothing of this sort survives.

A short extract from the Bishop's Will, explains the reason for so judging; though it may be difficult to understand fully the motives which prompted this wholesale destruction of manuscripts, and hard to believe that the order so given was a right one. The clause runs thus:—"It is my positive and express will that all my sermons, letters and papers,

whatever, which are in a deal box, locked, directed to Dr. Forster, and now standing in the little room within my library at Hempstead, be burnt without being read by any one, as soon as may be after my decease."

In the absence of all information on the subject, we can only conjecture as to the cause of this unsparing edict. So far as as it concerns his familiar correspondence, it arose in all probability, from an aversion very natural in a sensitive and modest man, to having his more private papers exposed to the rude gaze of the public. And as to his Sermons, he probably thought that his views in Morals and Religion were sufficiently expressed, in the discourses already published under his own eye; and, not being ambitious for the name of a voluminous writer, so much as for that of a judicious and sound one, he had never taken the pains to revise his papers for the press; neither, at the approach of death, did he care to commit so delicate a work to the hand of others.

These, no doubt, were the reasons for his order to burn the manuscripts; a decree which, under all the circumstances, it needed some resolution to pronounce. When we consider with what avidity, as he well knew, the smallest posthumous fragment of such an author would be caught up and preserved, this determination shows a noble superiority to the little vanity, which is often found in literary men, of cherishing with a silly fondness even the weakest and most deformed of their intellectual offspring. Through this natural infirmity, many a good writer is sunk beneath his proper level. It is self-evident, that every man who writes much, must be sometimes common-place: neither is it at all to be wondered at, that the quality of even the good material should be suspected, when the owner will take no pains to winnow out his wheat for preservation; but suffers it to lie hid in rubbish, from a strange infatuation as to the value of the chaff. Bishop Butler was doubtless very sensible of this common folly; and it may be well for even his solid reputation that he has so carefully avoided it.

With these preliminary remarks, which are mainly designed to account for any want of completeness that may be observed in our Memoir of Bishop Butler, we proceed at once to give a concise narrative of his life: noticing his personal traits, so far as they have been preserved to us; mentioning his several productions, in the order of publication; and occasionally interweaving a few thoughts on the influence of our author, in his twofold character, of a Christian Moralist, and an almost inspired Apologist for the Mysteries of our Faith.

Joseph Butler, the youngest of a family of eight children, was born on the 18th of May, 1692, at Wantage, in Berkshire, a town not far from Oxford, and noted also as the birth-place of Alfred the Great. His father, Thomas Butler, was a linen draper, who, at the time of his son's birth, had retired from business, and was then living in a house called "the Priory," which is still in existence; the very room in which the Bishop was born being still pointed out to visitors. No anecdotes of his early youth have been handed down to us; and indeed, beyond the names of his teachers, hardly anything is known of him, until he had almost arrived at manhood. There was some controversy, a few years ago, concerning his Baptism, and an extensive search was made, to ascertain, if possible, whether he had ever received that rite at the hands of a clergyman of the Church of England; but no evidence could be found in favor of the affirmative.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>b</sup> See, "British Magazine," Vol. XX, Nov. 1841, p. 505.

The early education of young Butler was received at the Free Grammar School of Wantage, then under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Philip Barton, of the established Church. It is said, that when he afterwards rose to a high station, the Bishop did not forget his old preceptor, but presented him to a comfortable rectorship; in which he died at a very advanced age, ten years after the decease of his illustrious pupil. If this clergyman worthily discharged the duties of his station, which his promotion by Butler renders highly probable, then surely Philip Barton did not live in vain; and forgotten as that name may now be upon earth, it deserves in reality far higher respect than those of many world-renowned conquerors, who have come down to us as candidates for immortal honor. So much may the mental and moral character of a pupil depend upon the fidelity and tact of him who first ventures to touch the strings of that delicate instrument, the human soul; that, in the absence of proof to the contrary, we feel almost warranted by the result, in presuming that Butler's earliest teacher was no hard mechanical pedagogue; but a man conscious of the greatness of his trust, and equal to its right fulfilment.

Butler having received from this gentleman the rudiments of a classical education, Thomas Butler, his father, who was a presbyterian, was anxious that his son should become a minister among the people of his own persuasion, and accordingly sent him to one of their seminaries then in high repute, at Gloucester, a few miles West of Wantage. Its principal was a Mr. Jones, a man of great learning, who had the honor of training several eminent men, and among others, Mr. Secker, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who was a school-mate there with Butler. The academy was soon removed to Tewkesbury, a town very near to Gloucester. Here, our student made great progress in Divinity, and his genius for profound speculation was displayed, at the age of twenty-one, in a series of letters to Dr. Samuel Clarke,\* upon some of the positions assumed in his then celebrated "Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God." These letters of Butler display a wonderful acuteness in detecting sophistry, a supreme love of Truth for its own sake, and a humility and self-possession truly admirable. On a few points, the young objector was satisfied with the Doctor's solutions, while on others he remained firm in his opposition. The courteous temper displayed on both sides is well worthy of imitation by all disputants, and the letters of Butler have a high value, as exhibiting his early development of power, and his resolute devotion, from the first, to that course of reflection in which he has no equal. These letters were anonymous, and, in order the better to conceal the author, Mr. Secker used to carry them to the post-office at Gloucester, and bring back also the Doctor's replies. Dr. Clarke was so much pleased with the temper and ability shown in these letters, that

\* The Rev. Samuel Clarke, D. D., Rector of St. James', Westminster, was one of the most able and versatile writers of the last century. He is still known as a Classical editor, by his "Cæsar" and "Homer." He also published several books on mathematics and natural philosophy, which, in their day, were highly esteemed. As a clergyman of the established Church, he held a high rank, too, in theology, until he became unhappily strongly inclined to Arianism. It was in reply to him, that Dr. Waterland wrote his great work in defence of the true doctrine of the Trinity. His "Demonstration" attempts to prove, by the *a priori* method, the existence and attributes of God; and, however ingenious, is far from being satisfactory. Two editions of this book are before us, viz: the 5th ed. 1719, and the 6th ed. 1725. To both of these, is appended the Doctor's correspondence with Butler, of which the title-page is as follows:—"Several Letters to the Reverend Dr. Clarke, from a Gentleman in Gloucestershire, relating to the First volume of the foregoing sermons: with the Doctor's answers thereunto." Dr. Clarke was born 1675, and died 1729.



he afterwards published them, with the answers, in all the later editions of his own work; and, on becoming acquainted with the author, he gave him several substantial proofs of his good opinion. The only attempt at Poetry ever known to have been made by the author of the *Analogy*, as well as the sole record of his admiration of the other sex, belongs to this period of his life. Mr. Bartlett, his biographer, tells us that there is still in the possession of his family "an acrostic epitaph written by him upon a female cousin for whom he is supposed to have entertained a great regard." The publication of these verses, however, he thinks, would add nothing to his literary fame. This is highly probable; and it only proves, what all experience may teach us, that the highest excellence is not attainable by the same person in more than one direction. For, even granting that genius is naturally indifferent as to the objects on which it shall be exerted, a special and exclusive training is needed, to secure that facility of execution which is essential to success, and which nothing but long practice is able to bestow. It was not Butler's mission to illustrate truth by those casual resemblances which please the fancy merely; but, it was his higher calling to find out those real analogies which satisfy and delight the Reason. There can be no better evidence of genius than the production of a great poem; and yet, as a work of high invention merely, it would be hard to choose whether one would prefer the honor of producing what Dante or Shakspeare wrote; or to have first struck out the great argument of Butler, which justifies the ways of God to men, by tracing out hidden resemblances between the seen and the unseen worlds. The study of the Calvinistic theology no doubt fostered Butler's natural bent towards abstruse speculation; but his chapter "on Necessity" proves that he retained no leaning whatever towards the rigid doctrine of Predestination. At all events, he was now meditating a departure from the ranks of dissent. We have the authority of Archbishop Secker for saying, that Butler was never a communicant in any dissenting congregation: on the contrary, that he went occasionally, from his early years, to the established worship. He at length, however began to have serious doubts as to the propriety of his becoming a dissenting minister, and entered fully into an examination of the question. The principles in which he had been educated were so unsatisfactory to him, that he deliberately resolved to enter the Established Church. This was a serious blow to his father, who was a staunch Presbyterian, and had fondly hoped to see his son a minister of that denomination. He accordingly called in some of their ablest divines to argue the matter of Church Polity with our young philosopher; but, finding him inflexible, it was agreed that he should remove to Oxford, where he entered as a commoner at Oriel College, March 17th, 1714.

While he was an undergraduate at Oxford, Butler formed an intimate friendship with Mr. Edward Talbot, a member of the same College with himself. This gentleman was the second son of Dr. Talbot, then Bishop of Salisbury and afterwards of Durham. He entered into holy orders before Butler, and his influence led to much of his friend's future preferment.

Young Talbot held in 1717 the living of Kendred, near Wantage; and it is supposed that Butler officiated for him during that year, because several entries in the register of baptisms and burials of that period are in what seems to be the handwriting of the latter. As neither Dr. Kippis, nor Mr. Bartlett, his late biographer, could ascertain the date of Butler's ordination, they presumed, from the above-named circumstance,

that he must have been in orders in the year 1717. The question is, however, now determined by the very recent discovery of a record of the event in the Register of Bishop Talbot; by which it is settled beyond a doubt, that he was ordained Deacon on the 26th of October, and Priest on the 21st of December, 1718.<sup>d</sup>

It is no slight proof of the estimation in which Butler was held by those who knew him best, even before he had acquired any public reputation, that, in the very year of his ordination, and when not more than twenty-six years of age, he was recommended by young Talbot and Dr. Clarke for the prominent station of Preacher at the Rolls.<sup>e</sup> This position, however, was productive of more honor than emolument, as the salary was small, and the Preacher must incur the expense of a city residence during the terms of Court.

Mr. Secker, who has been already named as the most intimate friend of Butler in the academy at Gloucester, seems also to have had strong doubts as to the propriety of his becoming a dissenting minister; and, not being able to dispel them, he resolved to study medicine. For this purpose he went over to the Continent, and after spending a considera-

<sup>d</sup> The following letter, containing an extract from the Register, was published in the British Magazine, vol. 20, Nov. 1841, p. 507.

"To the Rev. Walter Blunt, Strand, Gloucestershire.

"Rev. Sir,—On the other side is an extract from the Register of Talbot, from which it appears that Butler was ordained *deacon* on the 26th October, and *priest* on the 21st December, 1718. I cannot find his subscription to the Articles at the time of his ordination, nor can I find to what curacy he was licensed; but in the year 1721 it appears he was collated by Bishop Willis (who was translated from the see of Gloucester in that year,) to the prebend or canonry of Yatminster Prima, anciently founded in the Cathedral Church of Sarum.

"I remain, Rev. Sir, yours very obediently,

"Registry Close, Sarum, Oct. 5th 1841."

"EDW. DAVIES.

"Ordines Sacri et Generales per diem Revdum Patrem in Oratorio infra Palatium Epale Sarum Celebrati die Dominico Vicesimo Sexto scilicet die mensis Octobris Anno Dni Millimo Septingentesimo decimo octavo scilicet.

"JOSEPHUS BUTLER, Artium Baccus e Coll. Oriel Oxon.

"Ordinatus fuit in Diaconum."

"Ordines sacri et generales per dictum Revdum Patrem in Ecclesia Parochiali sancti Jacobi Westmord Celebrati die Dominico Vicesimo Primo scilicet die mensis Decembris anno dñi Millimo Septingentesimo Decimo octavo scilicet.

"JOSEPHUS BUTLER, jam Diaconum existentem

"Ordinatus fuit in Presbyterum."

<sup>e</sup>For the benefit of some American readers, it may be proper to explain the nature of this appointment a little more at length. The ancient building called "The Rolls," or "the Rolls Court," in Chancery Lane, London, is the place used for keeping records in Chancery.—These contain the Charters, Patents, &c., since the beginning of the reign of Richard the Third; which, being in rolls of parchment, give name to the office. The house is said to have been founded by Henry the Third, for converted Jews, who lived there under the instruction of a learned Christian; but in the year 1290, all the Jews being banished, the number of converts decreased, and some years afterwards the house with its chapel was annexed by patent to the office of the Keeper of the Rolls in Chancery. The Master of the Rolls resides here, and has a garden attached to his residence, in the very heart of the metropolis, though it is shut out from public view by the surrounding buildings. The office of that dignitary is one of great profit and honor. He is the principal Master in Chancery, and governs the affairs of the office. In the absence of the Lord Chancellor, he sometimes sits in his place. He has likewise his own department, and hears causes in the Rolls Chapel; but all his decisions may be carried by appeal before the Lord Chancellor. The present Chapel, in which Butler preached, is a small and gloomy edifice, in the Gothic style. It contains monuments to several eminent lawyers, in the costume of their times, and is attended chiefly by members of that learned profession. This may serve to explain why Butler ventured in his "Sermons at the Rolls" on points so abstruse as those which are there to be met with. However, inappropriate and unedifying such Discourses might be for a common audience, they would present no formidable difficulties to veteran lawyers who had mastered the subtle doctrine of "contingent remainders," or learned to follow the windings of an intricate suit in Chancery.

ble time at Paris, he was at length persuaded, by the urgent letters of Butler, to return to England and become a clergyman of the Established Church. On his arrival, Butler introduced his friend to Mr. Talbot. That estimable clergyman died in 1720, at a very early age, and on his death-bed recommended both Butler and Secker to the notice of his father, then Bishop of Durham. The prelate was not regardless of his son's request, for in 1721 he collated the former to the living of Haughton, near Darlington, and Secker to that of a neighboring parish.

Butler's professional life as a clergyman begins in his twenty-sixth year, when he entered upon his duties as preacher at the Rolls. This situation he occupied for a period of eight years, namely from 1718 to 1726. Having in the mean time been collated to the rectory of Stanhope, in the north of England, he divided his time between his duties in London and those of his country parish; and we are told that he was no less attentive to the claims of his rustic flock than to those of the learned audience before whom he discoursed in the metropolis.

In the year 1726, Butler first appeared before the public as an author, in an octavo volume of sermons, with the following title: "Fifteen Sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel, by Joseph Butler, LL.B., Preacher at the Rolls, and Rector of Stanhope, in the Bishoprick of Durham. London: Printed by W. Botham, for James and John Knapton, at the Crown in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1726." This edition is dedicated "To the Right Honorable Sir Joseph Jekyll, Master of the Rolls, &c." The style of Butler has been greatly censured; and some have supposed him to have been entirely negligent in the expression of his thoughts. Now Butler had not, it is true, that fine ear for rythmical melody which conducts even the longest sentences of Hooker and Burke, in perfect order, marching along to the sound of their own grand music. But he was not in any sense a slovenly composer. The best answer to such a charge would be a careful comparison of the first and second editions of these Sermons. The many minute verbal alterations in the second, show a pains-taking and conscientious revision: and Bp. Porteus says, that Secker assisted his friend in removing some obscurities of expression before they were again sent forth, with their admirable Preface, in 1729.

The author says, in that Preface, "I shall not set about to justify the propriety of preaching, or under the title of Sermons publishing, Discourses so abstruse as some of these are; neither is it worth while to trouble the reader with the account of my doing either. He must not however impute to me, as a repetition of the impropriety, this second edition, but to the demand for it." And again, at the end of it, he says: "it may be proper just to advertise the reader, that he is not to look for any particular reason for the choice of the greatest part of these dis-

<sup>1</sup>This title is exactly copied, (except that the subject of the discourses are omitted,) from the first edition, which, together with the third and fifth, is in the writer's possession. The fifth edition, which seems to have been printed soon after Bishop Butler's death, is without date. The following is believed to be an accurate account of the four editions published during the author's life time.

1. The First, without any preface, 1726, 8vo. pp. 312.
2. The Second, with Preface as it now stands, 8vo. 1729.
3. The Third, same as the last, 1736, 8vo. pp. 318.
4. The Fourth, (1749 or 1750,) with six Sermons on Public occasions, for the first time added. N.B. The Durham Charge was first printed separately in 1751, but did not appear in any collection of Butler's Discourses until inserted by Bp. Halifax, in his first edition of the Works, printed in 1786.



courses; their being taken from amongst many others, preached at the same place, through a course of eight years, being in great measure accidental. Neither is he to expect to find any other connexion between them than that uniformity of thought and design which will always be found in the writings of the same person, when he writes with simplicity and in earnest."

Such is the modest introduction to a series of Discourses whose publication formed a most important event in the History of Ethical Philosophy!

When he resigned his place as Preacher at the Rolls, he went to reside wholly at Stanhope, in the Diocese of Durham. This was one of the richest livings in England, and the mode of his receiving it was as follows. The parsonage at Haughton was much dilapidated; so that the whole, or a great part of it, needed to be re-built. He accordingly expended a large sum in providing materials for the work. The income of this living was exceedingly small; and Butler seems to have had by nature a strong passion for architecture, as, at each remove, we find him enlarging and adorning the buildings he is called for a time to occupy. The probability is, therefore, that if left to himself, he might have become greatly embarrassed by the undertaking on which he was about to enter. His old friend, and now near neighbour, Mr. Secker, who had more of worldly prudence than himself, saw the danger and came to his relief. He accordingly solicited Bishop Talbot to allow his friend to exchange Haughton for Stanhope, where the parsonage house was in good repair. The prelate was favorably disposed towards the friend of his departed son. He saw too the modest merit of Butler, and duly appropriated his great abilities. So the transfer was made, and the subject of our Memoir was thus relieved for the future from all pecuniary embarrassments.

In his parish at Stanhope, he resided for seven years in great seclusion, after quitting the Rolls Chapel. Far away from the learned and agreeable society to which he had been accustomed, the occupant of a remote parish in the North of England, and unrelieved by any of those domestic joys which a family affords, he seems now to have been thrown back completely on his own abundant resources. And perhaps it is well for the world that his meditations were so entirely undisturbed. It was among the quiet shades of Stanhope that he worked out to its present enduring completeness the greater part of the Analogy. This was the great work of his life. We may observe some faint traces of its vast design in his correspondence with Dr. Clarke, at the age of twenty-one; and, as it was not published until he was forty-four, there can be no doubt of the truth of the tradition that it had the full benefit of "*lucubrationes viginti annorum*" which the Law requires, to form the full-grown judicial intellect. Never was a mental fabric more deliberately or more strongly reared. Each stone was hewn and fitted to its place with the most precise exactness, and the consequence has been, that no art of the enemy has yet found means to shake them. Dr. Butler is said to have remarked to a friend, as the work itself bears evidence, that his plan in writing the Analogy had been "to endeavor to answer as he went along, every possible objection that might occur to any one against any position of his, in his book." This remark fully sustains the very sensible observations of a writer in the London Quarterly, in 1828. He says, "We have heard persons talk of the obscurity of Bishop Butler's style, and lament that his book was not re-written by some more luminous master of language.

We have always suspected that such critics knew very little about the Analogy. We would have no sacrilegious hand touch it. It would be like officious meddling with a well-considered move at chess. We should change a word in it with the caution of men expounding hieroglyphics,—it has a meaning, but *we* have not hit upon it; *others* may, or we ourselves may, *at another time*. The Analogy is a work closely and carefully packed up, out of twenty years' hard thinking. It must have filled folios, had its illustrious author taken less time to concoct it."

As every thing at all calculated to throw light on the habits of Butler while at Stanhope, will be read with interest, we give the following letter by Dr. Philpotts, now Bishop of Exeter, written to a friend who had desired him to find out if there were any recollections of Butler among the traditions of the place.

Exeter, *January 25th, 1835.*

My dear Sir :—I earnestly wish I could justify the report made to you by the Provost of Oriel, that I could supply you with several anecdotes of Bishop Butler. The truth, however, is, that although tantalized by seeming opportunities of acquiring some information respecting the private life and habits of one, to whom I have been accustomed to look up as the greatest of uninspired men, I have been mortified by my almost entire failure. In the rectory of Stanhope, I was successor to him after an interval of eighty years; and one of my earliest employments there, was to search for reliques of my illustrious predecessor. I was assured that an old parishioner, who, with a tolerably clear memory, had reached the age of ninety-three or ninety-four, recollected him well—but, as I ought, perhaps, to have anticipated, he could tell me nothing; for, what chance was there, that one who was a joiner's apprentice, of thirteen years of age, when Butler left Stanhope, could, four-score years afterwards, tell any thing about him? That he was respected and beloved by his parishioners, which was known before, was confirmed by my informant. He lived very retired, was very kind, and could not resist the importunities of common beggars, who, knowing his infirmity, pursued him so earnestly, as sometimes to drive him back into the house, as his only escape. I confess, I do not think my authority for this trait of character in Butler, is quite sufficient to justify my reporting it with any confidence. There was, moreover, a tradition of his riding a black pony, and riding always very fast. I examined the parish books, not with much hope of discovering any thing worth recording of him; and was unhappily as unsuccessful as I expected. His name, indeed, was subscribed to one or two acts of vestry, in a very neat and easy character; but if it was amusing, it was mortifying, to find the only trace of such a man's labours, recorded by his own hand, to be the passing a parish account, authorizing the payment of five shillings, to some adventurous clown who had destroyed a 'foumart,' or wood-marten, the marten-cat, or some other equally important matter."<sup>s</sup>

It has been well remarked of Butler, that his natural shyness and reserve were such, that 'while he loved solitude, he needed society.' His spirits at this period often drooped, for want of a bosom-friend to whom he could impart his feelings; or such intellectual associates as he had been accustomed to meet in the metropolis. Mr. Secker knew his friend's disposition so well, that he was exceedingly anxious to draw him

<sup>s</sup> Bartlett's Life, p. 76.

out of this retirement. Having been appointed King's Chaplain, in 1732, he took advantage of a conversation with Queen Caroline, the accomplished wife of George the Second, to mention to her the name and merits of his friend Mr. Butler. The Queen thought she had heard of his death, and notwithstanding the assurance of Secker to the contrary, she soon after asked the Archbishop of York if Butler was not dead.—He replied, "No, Madam, but he is *buried*." Whether the subject of this anecdote viewed his deep seclusion in the same light as the Queen's respondent, we cannot say. At all events, it was destined soon to terminate. Mr. Charles Talbot,<sup>b</sup> the brother of his early friend, and the person to whom he afterwards dedicated "The Analogy," being about this time made Lord Chancellor of England, Butler was appointed to be his Chaplain, on the recommendation of Mr. Secker. It thus became necessary that Butler should go to London, and, passing through Oxford on his way from the North, he received from the University, in 1733, the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, (D. C. L.) The Lord Chancellor gave him a Prebend in the Church at Rochester, and consented that he should reside in his parish at Stanhope during half the year. After being thus partially drawn out of seclusion, Dr. Butler very soon became prominent. In 1736, he was appointed Clerk of the Closet to the Queen, and, at her request, he was in the habit of attending upon her daily, for devotional exercises and the discussion of theological subjects, from seven to nine every evening. The first and last of Butler's private memoranda, of this period, record his administration of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist to the Queen, in private, soon after his first entering upon the duties of his station; and again in October 1737, a few weeks only before her death, which occurred on the 20th of November in that year. Queen Caroline was a woman of excellent natural abilities, and exerted a great influence over the mind of the King, to whom she was, in every way, much superior. Her religious views, however, were extremely latitudinarian; and her indulgence to some of her husband's vices does not indicate a very fine moral sensibility. Yet, the sterling piety of Butler, who, "in a kind of Athanasian loneliness," withstood the semi-infidelity of the court and nation, made an impression upon her which even the agonies of death could not obliterate. Lord Hervey, in his posthumous Memoirs recently published, says, when speaking of her last moments:—"The Queen desired the Archbishop [Potter] to take care of Dr. Butler, her Clerk of the Closet; and he was the only body I ever heard of her recommending, particularly and by name, all the while she was ill." This is one of the most agreeable facts mentioned in that very spirited, but ill-natured book, which strips the friendly veil from the court-life of the earlier princes of the House of Brunswick; and even here, truth compels us to doubt, whether Butler's philosophical ability may not, at first, have had more to do than his piety in securing the Queen's regard. Though, we may charitably hope that, in that solemn hour, when speculation on futurity was to be exchanged for sight, her thoughts centered upon Butler, because she personally knew that his moral worth was no less extraordinary than the powers of his reason.

<sup>b</sup> This eminent judge, (who, as Lord Campbell says, was alone, of all the Chancellors, without an accuser or detractor, in his public or private capacity,) having held his high office but about three years, and raised the greatest expectations, was suddenly removed by death, Feb. 14th, 1737, in the 53rd year of his age.

See, Lord Campbell's Lives of the Lord Chancellors, vol. 4. p. 509, American Edition.

Whilst Dr. Butler held an office in the Queen's household, he presented to her a copy of the first edition of his immortal work "*The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature.*" The advertisement of the first quarto edition is dated May, 1736. The author is styled, in the title page, "Joseph Butler, LL. D., Rector of Stanhope, in the Bishopric of Durham;" and this work, like the Sermons, was published by the Messrs. Knapton. These worthy booksellers are favorably spoken of in Warburton's Correspondence; and, if their being the original publishers of Butler<sup>1</sup> were not enough to keep their memory green in the hearts of literary men, it will only be needful to add, that they, with the Rivingtons and others, were the heroic spirits who first ventured to issue a work like Johnson's Dictionary, unaided by the smiles or the money of a Patron.

For the production of such a work as the Analogy, the genius of Bishop Butler seems to have been peculiarly adapted. His perception of hidden relations was wonderfully keen; and yet his judgment was so exact, that he never pushed resemblances to a fanciful extreme. Perhaps no one has ever read the book, for the first time, without a feeling of mingled wonder and delight, on finding that difficulties, hardly shaped and made definite to ourselves, are here anticipated and beautifully solved. And yet, it promises almost nothing. All the work professes to do, is, to show, that Christianity is not absurd; and, that Revealed Religion cannot be proved untrue!

Were the performance no greater than the promise, it would be, at best, only a negative argument on that well-worn topic, "*The Evidences.*" But, it is far more. The devout believer loves it, better than the skeptic. The latter is indeed silenced by its power: but the former values it especially, as a key to the whole study of religious truth. It is so reverential, so calmly judicious, and so continually reminds us of the depth of human ignorance, that its spirit excels even the matter. At the same time, the author's greatness and goodness are so visible, in every line, that we feel as if it would be not only a folly, but something in the nature of a sin, to deny the truth of his opinions.

Butler's Analogy has never yet had any powerful antagonist, nor any successful imitator;<sup>2</sup> and, from the date of its publication to the present time, there might be collected a chain of commendatory notices, such as have been bestowed on no other volume produced in the eighteenth century.

As an exception, however, to the high favor with which the work was received on its first appearance, we must be allowed to quote an anecdote given by Mr. Bartlett, which proves that even Butler was not

<sup>1</sup> Of the editions of the Analogy published during the author's life, the present writer has seen but two, viz: The first, in 4to. pp. 329, and the fourth, 8vo. pp. 467. The second, is said by Mr. Bartlett to have been revised and issued, in 8vo. during the year 1736. The date of the third edition, the writer has no means of ascertaining.

<sup>2</sup> Through the kindness of a learned friend, the writer has been made acquainted with a curious book, now little known;—viz: "*The Analogy of Divine Wisdom, in the Material, Sensitive, Moral, Civil, and Spiritual System of Things; In eight parts; By Richard Bannan, B. D.*" Dublin, 1750, 8vo.

The author, a man of considerable ability, alludes in his Preface, with great respect, to Butler's Analogy, and to its author, who was still alive; but he disclaims with a good deal of feeling the charge, which he says has been made, of his being only a copyist of Butler.

There is another work which from its title, must have some resemblance to that of Dr. Butler. It was, however, published three years before his. The author was Dr. Peter Brown, Bishop of Cork; it is entitled, "*Things Divine and Supernatural conceived by Analogy with Things Human.*" Of this book, the writer has been unable to procure a copy.

exempt from the disadvantage which always attends upon "a prophet in his own country."

"Upon the publication of the *Analogy*, the bishop presented a copy of the first quarto edition to each of his nephews at Wantage. One of them, John, a wealthy and eccentric bachelor, who had more taste for practical mechanics than for metaphysical research, appeared to attach but little value to his uncle's production. Having occasion to borrow an iron vice of his neighbour, Mr. Thompson, a shrewd and sensible Scotch solicitor, who spoke in high terms of the *Analogy*, and expressed great respect for the author, John Butler proposed, that, as Mr. Thompson liked the *Analogy*, and he himself liked the iron vice, they should make an exchange. To this suggestion Mr. Thompson cheerfully assented, and John Butler left him highly pleased, and thinking that he had turned his uncle's present to an excellent account, by obtaining for it an implement of so much more useful a character."

The *Analogy* was assailed, it is true, by two or three persons on its first appearance; among others, by a very vain, though dull and heavy writer, the Rev. Mr. Bott; who undertook, with quite a patronizing air, "to remind this author of a few things, which in his humble opinion, greatly deserved to be reviewed and corrected." Dr. Butler never took any notice of these attacks by his captious critics, and the world had so completely forgotten the annotations of Mr. Bott and his worthy coadjutors, that in 1786, when Bishop Halifax published his edition of our author's works, he did not seem to have been aware of such strictures having been made; since he speaks of the "Durham Charge" as the only one of his writings which had been subject to hostile remarks.

In the year following the death of Queen Caroline, Dr. Butler was nominated by the King to the Bishopric of Bristol, and his consecration took place on the 3rd of December, 1738. The revenues of this see were very small, not more than £400 per annum, which of itself was by no means sufficient to support the dignity of the Episcopal office as it exists in England. In the present instance, the nominee might indeed have derived a sufficient support from Stanhope, but he had conscientious scruples about retaining his rectorship and performing its duties by proxy, as was then but too common. Dr. Butler appears to have been a good deal embarrassed by the position into which he was thrown, and, from the tone of his letter to the minister, Sir Robert Walpole, he seems to have thought himself rather unkindly treated. At all events, he states his views of the matter with as much candour as would have been at all consistent with courtly etiquette. The letter is as follows:

STANHOPE, August 28th, 1838.

Sir:—I received yesterday, from your own hand, (an honour which I ought very particularly to acknowledge,) the information that the king had nominated me to the bishoprick of Bristol. I most truly think myself very highly obliged to his Majesty, as much, all things considered, as any subject in his dominions; for I know no greater obligation, than to find the Queen's condescending goodness and kind intentions towards me, transferred to his Majesty. Nor is it possible, while I live, to be without the most grateful sense of his favour to me, whether the effects of it be greater or less; for this must in some measure depend upon accidents. Indeed, the bishopric of Bristol is not very suitable either to the condition of my fortune, or the circumstances of my preferment; nor, as I should have thought, answerable to the recommendation with which



I was honoured. But you will excuse me, sir, if I think of this last with greater sensibility than the conduct of affairs will admit of.

But, without entering further into detail, I desire, Sir, you will please to let his Majesty know, that I humbly accept this instance of his favour with the utmost possible gratitude.

I beg leave, also, sir, to return you my humble thanks for your good offices upon this, and all occasions; and for your very obliging expressions of regard to,

Sir, your most obedient, most faithful,  
and most humble servant.

JOSEPH BUTLER.

"By means of my distance from Durham, I had not yours, sir, till yesterday, so that this is the first post I could answer it."

In the year 1740, a vacancy occurred in the deanery of St. Paul's, London, and Bishop Butler was presented to that office by the king. By receiving this appointment, he was enabled to resign the rectory of Stanhope, as well as his place at Rochester, and so became free to attend more exclusively to his episcopal duties.

A short time before Butler became Bishop of Bristol, he had a correspondence with Henry Home, Lord Kaimes, who, without any previous acquaintance, had written to the author of the *Analogy*, to have some doubts removed respecting the evidences of natural and revealed religion. The biographer of Lord Kaimes says that this distinguished Scotchman "earnestly entreated that he might be allowed a personal interview; which, notwithstanding the distance that separated them, he was willing at his own cost alone to accomplish. Dr. Butler answered his letter with the utmost politeness, and endeavoured, as far as he could, by writing, to satisfy Mr. Home's inquiries, but modestly declined a personal meeting, on the score of his own natural diffidence and reserve, his being unaccustomed to oral controversy, and his fear that the cause of truth might thence suffer from the unskillfulness of its advocate. However to be regretted that these letters have not been preserved, (possibly from being lent to some of his philosophical friends,) there is reason to believe the correspondence was most satisfactory to Mr. Home, as he retained, through life, the greatest regard for Dr. Butler, and though differing from him in some speculative points, entertained the highest respect for his abilities."<sup>a</sup>

In the year 1738, David Hume procured a letter of introduction to Dr. Butler from his friend Mr. Home, with a view of consulting him, and obtaining his opinion of the "*Treatise on Human Nature*" which Hume was about to publish. Calling to present his letter, Hume found Butler out of town, and having some fears as to what might be the Doctor's opinion, the book was put to press without his examination, and it does not appear that Hume and Butler ever met. Their course, from this time forward diverged "wide as the poles asunder."

In 1746, after he had been Bishop of Bristol about eight years, Dr. Butler was appointed Clerk of the Closet to the King.

From the date of his consecration, Bishop Butler devoted himself very diligently to the performance of his duties at Bristol. When he first went thither, to take charge of his diocese, he found the bishop's palace in very bad repair. It was a large, though not very convenient residence, adjoining the cathedral, and had been originally designed for the abbot's lodgings,

<sup>a</sup> Woodhouselee's *Life of Lord Kaimes*, as quoted by Mr. Bartlett.

when the church itself, now named from the HOLY TRINITY, belonged to the estate of the monastery of St. Augustine. Dr. Butler is said to have greatly improved the episcopal residence, and to have expended, in making repairs, about £5,000; and there is good reason to believe, what has been often asserted, that he laid out in building alone, independently of various liberal donations to charitable objects in the same period, a much larger sum than he received from his bishopric during the twelve years of his incumbency.<sup>b</sup> When sometimes asked how he could afford such expenditure, he used to answer that "the deanery of St. Paul's paid for it." While engaged in making these improvements, the merchants of Bristol presented him with a large quantity of cedar, for architectural purposes. A portion of this wood which was not used at Bristol, he afterwards took to Durham, where it remained unwrought, until one of his successors, Bishop Barrington, had it made up into articles of furniture, which he distributed as presents to those who valued such memorials of Butler. Among his other alterations, the Bishop entirely renewed the interior of his private chapel. This apartment was extremely small, being only sixteen feet long, and eleven broad;<sup>b</sup> its windows were adorned with stained glass of considerable antiquity, and one of the Bishop's arrangements excited so much clamor against him, that it deserves perhaps a passing notice. Bishop Halifax, in a note to his edition of Butler, mentions that the Bishop "put up a cross, a plain piece of marble inlaid, in the chapel of his episcopal house,"—which act, however harmless in itself, was magnified by some alarmist, (instigated by an anonymous libeller who took exception afterwards to the Charge at Durham,) into a sufficient ground for "presumption that he was inclined to Popish forms and ceremonies, and had no great dislike to Popery itself." At the present day, when Christians of various denominations, never suspected of Popish inclinations, do not hesitate to employ the cross, as a most expressive and allowable symbol of their faith, it will hardly be expected that we should formally undertake to defend this act of Bishop Butler, which has been the occasion of such a senseless clamor. May we not rather regard it as a proof of Butler's fine sense of ritual propriety, that, in a cold and godless age, when even the common decencies of worship were shamefully neglected, he had so much of good taste and piety as to anticipate the revival of a Catholic emblem, which semi-infidelity and Puritanic bigotry had nearly driven out of use. Whilst the crucifix is a corrupt invention of the middle ages, the simple cross was always a favourite symbol of the early Christians, and, as such, it has never been objected to, except by a very small fragment of universal Christendom.

The foolish imputation of Popery made against Bishop Butler, will be examined more specially hereafter, in connexion with the Durham Charge; a few particulars here respecting the Bristol chapel and its ornaments, may perhaps be read with interest. Mr. Butler says, that "over the Communion Table he placed the cross, at which offence was subsequently taken, when the charge of attachment to Romish usages was made against him. The ground of this cross, was a large slab of black marble, into which a cross of white marble, of about three feet high by eighteen inches wide, was sunk. The whole was surrounded by some of the cedar alluded to, which was beautifully carved. The chapel and the cross remained, in the state Bishop Butler left them, until the destruction of the palace by an infuriated mob, upon the 31st of October, 1831. The

<sup>b</sup> Barrett's History of Bristol.

aged sexton of the Cathedral, who appears to hold the memory of Bishop Butler in great veneration, assured the writer of this Memoir, that as soon as the fire was sufficiently subdued for him to venture amongst the ruins he searched them in the hope of recovering the marble cross, but discovered, at length, that it was broken to pieces and destroyed."c Thus ends the history of "the marble cross," which has given so much employment to the tongues and pens of many, throughout a century!

An interesting anecdote is quoted by Mr. Bartlett, from a tract by Dean Tucker, the domestic chaplain of Bishop Butler at Bristol; who is worthy of notice as having written, a strong pamphlet against the policy of the American war, for which he incurred great odium at the time, but the soundness of whose reasoning was proved by the event. In a note to a political tract published in 1775, he remarks;—"The late Dr. Butler, bishop of Bristol, and afterwards of Durham, had a singular notion respecting large communities and public bodies; a notion which is not perhaps, altogether inapplicable to the present case. His custom was, when at Bristol, to walk for hours in his garden in the darkest night which the time of the year could afford, and I had frequently the honour to attend him. After walking some time, he would stop suddenly, and ask the question, 'What security is there against the insanity of individuals? The physicians know of none; and as to divines, we have no data, either from Scripture or from reason to go upon, relative to this affair.'

"'Twas my lord! No man has a lease of his understanding, any more than of his life; they are both in the hands of the Sovereign Disposer of all things.'

"He would then take another turn, and again stop short:—"Why might not whole communities and public bodies be seized with fits of insanity, as well as individuals?"

"'My lord, I have never considered the case, and can give no opinion concerning it.'

"'Nothing but this principle, that they are liable to insanity, equally at least with private persons, can account for the major part of those transactions of which we read in history.'

"I thought little," adds the Dean, "of that odd conceit of the Bishop at that juncture; but I own I could not avoid thinking of it a great deal since and applying it to many cases."

This speculation, in regard to "the madness of the people," is certainly curious; and, having been thrown out by so thoughtful a man, it may be worth remembering.

The more familiar the King, George the II, became with the many excellent traits of Butler's character, the more he was satisfied of his fitness for any station, however eminent. On the death of Archbishop Potter, in 1747, he therefore offered him the primacy, which however Dr. Butler positively declined. The low state of religion at that period, and the bitter assaults of infidels and radicals upon the Established Church, appear to have alarmed him, and made him hesitate to accept a

<sup>c</sup>As Mr. Bartlett does not state the cause of the riot, it may be proper to say, that the Bristol riots of 1831, grew out of popular indignation against Sir Charles Wetherell, Recorder, whose course in parliament did not satisfy the mob; as he contributed to the defeat of the Reform Bill, which, in the next year, obtained a majority in the House of Lords. The entrance of the Recorder into Bristol, to hold a court at the time required by law, was the signal for the outbreak, his life was seriously endangered; the lives of many citizens were lost, and much private as well as public property destroyed, the bishop's palace was consumed by fire, although the cathedral adjoining it was saved. For a very full and interesting account of these riots, see "The United Service Journal," for 1831, Part 3, p. 438.

station of such great responsibility. Some members of his family, and especially a wealthy nephew who has been already spoken of, were extremely anxious that he should not decline so great an honour. Indeed, this nephew, not being at all able to understand how conscientious motives could come in to induce any one to refuse a place which would reflect credit on the family, went immediately to London, and offered to advance his uncle £20,000 or any other sum he might desire, supposing that the expensiveness of the position alone deterred him. But, finding the good man resolved not to accept the office of Archbishop, he returned to Wantage, believing, it is said, that his uncle, however great he might be as an author, was strangely deficient in common sense and worldly prudence.

There is one circumstance belonging to this portion of the life of Butler, which, besides affording a proof of his practical wisdom, and pious care for the remoter portions of his Master's vineyard, ought to endear his memory to Americans, as one of the earliest and most judicious friends of religion in the colonies. About the year 1750, he drew up a plan for introducing the Episcopate into America, which did not then receive the approbation of government. Some years after his death, it was again considered, with the decided support of Sherlock and Secker; but, although it seems to have been thought the best which had been suggested, no efficient action was taken in the business before the revolutionary war. Great abuses, it is well known, existed in the colonial Churches, for want of proper Episcopal supervision. The remedy proposed by Butler would, in all probability, have removed the evil.

The services of Bishop Berkely, the self-sacrificing and ingenious author of "*The Minute Philosopher*," are well known and valued by our countrymen; and it is gratifying to be able to add to the list of our benefactors, in will at least, if not in deed, another foreign prelate no less eminent for piety, and superior to Berkely in the greatness of his productions. Bishop Butler's plan was as follows:—

"1. That no coercive power is desired over the laity in any case, but only a power to regulate the behaviour of the clergy who are in episcopal orders; and to correct and punish them according to the laws of the Church of England, in case of misbehaviour or neglect of duty, with such power as the commissaries abroad have exercised.

"2. That nothing is desired for such bishops, that may in the least interfere with the dignity, or authority, or interest of the governor, of any other officer of the state. Probate of wills, license for marriages &c. to be left in the hands where they are; and no share in the temporal government is desired for the bishops.

"3. The maintenance of such bishops not to be at the charge of the colonies.

"4. No bishops are intended to be settled in places where the government is in the hands of dissenters, as in New England, &c. But authority to be given only to ordain clergy for such Church of England congregations as are among them, and to inspect into the manners and behaviour of the said clergy, and to confirm the members thereof."<sup>d</sup>

<sup>d</sup> It is somewhat curious, that the above plan for an American Episcopate is printed, verbatim, in the appendix to Dr. Chandler's *Life of Rev. Dr. Johnson* (ed. New York, 1850,) as "Proposals relating to American Bishops, sent to England in 1750."—It is signed, at Boston, by five American clergymen, and would seem to be their own production. Yet, these same Proposals are published in the *Annual Register* of 1765, as the plan of Bishop Butler; and the Rev. East Apthorp replying to Dr. Mayhew, in the same year, says he has

In the year 1750, another change was in store for Bishop Butler, as he was then transferred from Bristol to the Diocese of Durham. There were at first some difficulties in the way, owing to conditions being proposed to which Dr. Butler had great objections.

There is a tradition in his family, that when he received from the minister a notice of his promotion, he wrote a letter in reply, expressing his gratitude, but declining the honour, saying that "it was a matter of indifference to him, whether he died Bishop of Bristol, or of Durham; but that it was *not* a matter of indifference to him, whether or not the honors of the see were invaded during his incumbency; and he therefore begged to be allowed to continue Bishop of Bristol." In answer to this, he soon heard from the minister, that "it was his majesty's pleasure that he should become Bishop of Durham, without any condition whatever."

The income of this diocese was greater than that of any other in England, and the Bishops of Durham had, at that time, a greater share than others of temporal power. A conscientious man, like Butler, would therefore naturally feel some anxiety about incurring the new responsibilities of such a station. From two letters of his, written at this time, the following may be taken as the fullest record of his views and feelings in regard to the transfer.

"My good Friend,

"I should have been mighty glad of the favour of a visit from you, when you were in town. I thank you for your kind congratulations, though I am not without my doubts and fears, how far the occasion of them is a real subject of congratulation to me. Increase of fortune is insignificant to one who thought he had enough before; and I foresee many difficulties in the station I am coming into, and no advantage worth thinking of, except some greater power of being serviceable to others; and whether this be an advantage entirely depends on the use one shall make of it; I pray God it may be a good one. It would be a melancholy thing in the close of life, to have no reflections to entertain one's self with but that one had spent the revenues of the Bishopric of Durham, in a sumptuous course of living, and enriched one's friends with the promotions of it, instead of having really set one's self to do good, and promote worthy men; yet this right use of fortune and power is more difficult than the generality of even good people think, and requires both a guard upon one's self, and a strength of mind to withstand solicitations, greater, I wish I may not find it, than I am master of. I pray God preserve your health, and am always, dear sir,

"Your affectionate Brother and Servant,

"JOSEPH DUNELM."

During the winter after his translation, Bishop Butler was obliged to be in London, attending to his duties in Parliament; so he did not arrive in his new diocese until the 28th of June, 1751. On that occasion an address was made to him of a highly complimentary character, in the name of the dean and chapter of the cathedral; to which the Bishop very briefly replied.

The life of Butler was now drawing to a close. Not more than twenty months elapsed from the date of his transfer to that of his death; but during this brief interval, he was not inactive. He seems to have entered upon the duties of his new diocese, with an almost youthful ardor.

the scheme in the Bishop's own hand-writing. The true solution of the difficulty may be, that Bishop Butler furnished the suggestions to Mr. Cutler and his clerical associates, who, by his desire, adopted them as their own.



His bounty to the poor, always liberal to the extent of his means, was now greatly increased; and, very soon after his arrival at Durham, he assembled his clergy for the purpose of delivering his first and as it proved his final charge. Its subject was, "The importance of External Religion." This, notwithstanding its brevity, must ever be regarded by the Christian student, as the best production of his pen: and it is pleasing to observe that this, his last effort, displays more depth of feeling than any of his previous writings, which are always radiant with the clear cold light of intellect, rather than warmed by the emotions of the heart. That some admonition on the points discussed in the Charge, was needed in England, in the middle of the last century, when the spirit and the form of godliness had alike dwindled away, will hardly be disputed. The only question that remains, is, whether the Bishop was disposed to exalt the outward rites of religion to an extravagant degree. Those who will now read the Durham Charge, carefully and without prejudice, we think must answer in the negative. In the case of those who have an honest, though perhaps a morbid, dread of the least tendency to Popery, it will be hard to satisfy them that there is no erroneous doctrine in a discourse which, a hundred years ago, was thought to savor so very strongly of Roman superstition. But the truth is, in that age earnest piety was so little prevalent, that the term "superstition" was affixed by the multitude to the most spiritual truths of pure and undefiled religion. In proof of which, we may note that Butler, for writing a sermon "On the Love of God," thought it necessary to vindicate himself against the possible charge of *enthusiasm*! Such was the state of those times. And, it may possibly diminish somewhat the weight of the censures made by Butler's accusers, to know that his assailants, whether in or out of the Church of England, were all more or less tainted with the prevailing Arianism of the times.

The first attack upon the Charge was contained in a pamphlet, published in 1752, entitled "A Serious Inquiry into the Use and Importance of External Religion: occasioned by some Passages in the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Durham's Charge to the Clergy of that Diocese;—Humbly addressed to his Lordship." The object of this anonymous pamphlet was to prove that Dr. Butler had strong leanings to superstition and Popery; and its author is now known to have been Archdeacon Blackburne, a man of captious, quarrelsome temper, and of loose principles in some of the fundamentals of the faith. This publication however caused but little alarm among the Bishop's friends, and least of all in his own diocese, where he was best known. A more malignant publication was reserved until fifteen years after the death of Butler, when in 1767, another anonymous pamphlet was issued, entitled "The Root of Protestant Errors Examined," in which it is asserted, that the late Bishop of Durham was reported to have died in the Communion of the Church of Rome!

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\* Professor Henry Reed, of Philadelphia, has truly said of the Durham Charge;—"The warning of Bishop Butler was unhappily the voice of one speaking in his Church in a kind of Athanasian loneliness, and God in mercy and wisdom, soon took him from those who were unworthy of him. The warning voice was heard no more, and probably soon forgotten; but if now looking back over the successive changes in the Church of England, we may venture to indulge a single speculation upon the course of such events, may we not believe, that if the admonition had seasonably been heard, wherever the English tongue is spoken, Christian zeal would have been burning with a steadier and more aspiring flame, and, Christian unity would not have been grievously impaired by the secession of thousands, who went away because the Church was not in earnest."—See *Report of Bishop White Prayer Book Society*, 1844.

As is usually the case with unfounded gossip when it cannot be substantiated, a convenient vagueness is thrown around the story. No authority is given, and no circumstances named. Although it may be doubted whether such a rumor deserved the slightest notice, it served to bring out Archbishop Secker in defence of his departed friend. With this view, he sent several communications to a public paper; and, though he undertook voluntarily to prove a negative, when he might have simply called upon the assailant to make out his case; the evidence adduced is so conclusive against the possibility of its truth, that the slander seems almost unparalleled in the annals of defamation. The single fact that Secker, Dr. Butler's most intimate friend through life, never knew or suspected such a thing, is of itself sufficient refutation. Bishop Halifax, in his Preface of 1786, has given a full abstract of the charges, and of Archbishop Secker's replies. But, as it is confidently believed that no person now living has the slightest faith in the absurd story referred to, there can be no need of dwelling any longer on the subject.

Very soon after Bishop Butler's removal to Durham, his health began rapidly to decline, and it now became evident to himself and others that his end was fast approaching. He was perfectly resigned to the Divine Will, and only regretted that he should so soon be cut off from those opportunities of usefulness which his new position had afforded him. He was in the beginning of his illness taken to Clifton, near Bristol, in the hope that he might be relieved by its famous waters. These however, not having the effect desired, he was from thence removed to Bath, where he was faithfully attended by Dr. Nathaniel Forster and Dr. Benson, Bishop of Gloucester. His friend Secker, then Bishop of Oxford, was only partially recovered from a severe illness, and that alone prevented his joining him. Bishop Secker took every means in his power to have early intelligence of his friend, about whom he was greatly uneasy, and a number of letters to him are now extant, from Dr. Forster and Bishop Benson, recording the whole progress of Dr. Butler's last illness. The following are some extracts from them:

On the 4th of June, 1752, Dr. Forster writes from Bath to Bishop Secker:—"My Lord,—I have barely strength and spirits to inform your lordship, that my good Lord was brought hither in a very weak condition, yesterday, in hopes of receiving some benefit from these waters."

Bishop Benson writing to Secker, says, "My dear Lord:—After my last to you from Bath, the last time I went in to the Bishop, I found both his understanding and his speech, after a little sleep he had, more perfect than they were before. This made my taking leave so much the more painful. It must be, as he with a good deal of emotion said, a 'farewell for ever,' and said kind and affecting things more than I could bear. I had a great deal of time afterwards, for melancholy but I hope useful reflection, when alone on my journey, and which I was very glad gave me opportunity of being alone. The liver, by the account which the physicians gave, was so much decayed that no art was capable of restoring it, and nothing but the formation of a new organ could restore him. If this was the case, it was in vain to talk or think of any expedients." And on the 16th of June, Dr. Forster tells the issue thus, to the bishop of Oxford. "My very good Lord: This morning, about eleven o'clock, my best of friends exchanged this life for a far better. Your lordship, on this melancholy occasion, will excuse, I doubt not, the shortness of this, from,

"Your lordship's most dutiful son, &c. &c.

N. FORSTER."

"It is proposed, agreeably to my lord of Gloucester's advice, to bury his lordship at Bristol."

The original letters, from which the above passages are taken, Mr. Bartlett says, are deposited at Lambeth. They are enclosed in a paper endorsed as follows, in the hand-writing of Archbishop Secker. "Letters from Dr. Forster and Bishop Benson, concerning the last illness and death of Bishop Butler; to be kept at Lambeth, as negative arguments against the calumny of his dying a papist."

There is an incident often repeated in a variety of forms, respecting Bishop Butler's death-bed, by which it appears that, as the solemn time of his departure drew nigh, he dwelt with peculiar pleasure on the 16th verse of the 3rd chapter of St. John—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Dr. Forster, it is said, was reading to him the chapter in which these words occur, when the bishop stopped him, and requested him to read them over, saying that "he had never before felt those words to be so satisfactory and consoling."

Having thus yielded up his spirit, in humility and holy hope, on the morning of Tuesday, June 16th, 1752, his remains were buried in Bristol Cathedral, on the evening of the following Saturday, June 20th. Dr. Forster thus describes the funeral in a letter to Bishop Secker, dated June 21st. "Yesterday evening I attended my late great and good friend to the place where, about two years ago, I waited upon him from hence by his orders with very different spirits, and on a very different occasion. His body was interred near the throne. And as my lord of Gloucester had advised that the funeral should be quite a private one, the hearse was followed only by two coaches and six, the servants in livery going before it on horseback. The pall was supported by the chancellor, Dr. Waterland,<sup>f</sup> and four others of the senior clergy, who were most known to his lordship, and followed by myself and the rest of the family, in the same order in which we usually attended his lordship to the Cathedral at Durham. The subdean, Mr. Chapman, performed the service."

The following epitaph, written by Dr. Forster, is inscribed upon a marble stone placed over Bishop Butler's remains.

H. S.

Reverendus admodum in Christo Pater  
JOSEPHUS BUTLER LL D.

Hujusce primo Dioceseos

Deinde Dunelmensis Episcopus.

Qualis quantusque Vir erat

Sua libentissime agnovit ætas;

Et si quid Præsuli aut Scriptori ad famam valent

Mens altissima,

Ingeniū perspicacis et subacti vis,

Animusque pius, simplex, candidus, liberalis,

Mortui haud facile evanescet memoria.

Obiit Bathoniæ

XVI Kal. Jul. A. D. 1752.

Annos natus 60.

In the year 1834, a handsome monument was erected in Bristol Cathedral, by subscription, to the memory of Bishop Butler. The

<sup>f</sup>This was Dr. Henry Waterland, Prebendary of Bristol. See Van Mildert's *Life of Waterland*, p. 252.

inscription was written by Dr. Southey, the late Poet Laureate, as follows:—

Sacred  
To the Memory  
of  
JOSEPH BUTLER, D. C. L.  
Twelve years Bishop of this Diocese,  
and  
Afterwards Bishop of Durham,  
Whose mortal Part is deposited  
In the choir of this Cathedral.  
Others had established  
The Historical and Prophetical grounds  
Of the Christian Religion  
and  
That sure Testimony of its Truth,  
Which is found in its perfect adaptation  
To the heart of man.  
It was reserved for him to develop  
Its Analogy to the Constitution  
And Course of nature;  
And laying his strong foundations  
In the depth of that great argument,  
There to construct  
Another and irrefragable proof:  
Thus rendering Philosophy  
Subservient to Faith;  
And finding in outward and visible things  
The type and evidence  
Of those Within the Veil,  
Born A. D. 1692, Died 1752.  
“He who believes the Scripture  
To have proceeded from Him who is the  
Author of Nature, may well expect  
To find the Same Sort of Difficulties  
In it, as are found in the Constitution  
Of Nature.”—Origen, *Philocal.* p. 23.

The personal appearance of Bishop Butler is said to have been highly interesting. The earliest portrait of him, taken at the age of forty-five, has a fine intellectual expression, and that almost *feminine*, though not *effeminate*, cast of countenance, which Coleridge remarks as common to men of genius. His native modesty, and diffidence in the company of strangers, continued to the last; but in a circle of familiar friends he was perfectly happy and at ease. In the words of one who knew him well, “He was a most delightful companion, from a delicacy of thinking, an extreme politeness, a vast knowledge of the world, and a something peculiar, to be met with in nobody else.”

In his later years, when high in office, he preserved all those finer traits of character for which he was remarkable before. His face was then thin and pale; but its placid sweetness of expression bore evidence of an even temper and a holy life. His white hair hung down upon his shoulders; and, in performing his sacred duties, a divine animation inspired his features, and lighted up his care-worn face.

In theology, as well as in politics, he was thoroughly conservative. His piety was deep-seated and fervent; not disposed to waste itself in words, or to find vent in any noisy or ostentatious way. It was of a quiet, meditative sort; though his liberal charities to the sick and poor show that it did not loose itself in sentimental musings. He passed on quietly through life; a retired, solitary man; too reserved to mingle with the crowd, yet unable to live alone, without having his natural sensibility morbidly increased. He was a patient, silent thinker, who developed truth for the benefit of others; and of him it may surely be said, that the good he did was not interred with his bones.

Our narrative of the life of Bishop Butler must here terminate. For those who read biography merely to be amused by it, this record will probably have little interest. Butler's warfare was spiritual, not carnal. He experienced no strange vicissitudes of fortune; and his achievements were not of a kind to startle or amaze us. Yet, there are some, it must be hoped, who will be glad to learn something of the earthly lot of one so eminent. The very evenness of his whole career, the absence of family cares, and that easy fortune which placed him beyond the reach of want, all no doubt contributed to his success, by allowing a more perfect self-devotion than would have otherwise been possible, to those calm studies and reflections in which he has probably no equal. It is the inner and hidden life of Butler; the growth of his mind; the development of piety; his mode of thinking, and the modification of these, wrought by outward circumstances, that must give the whole of its interest to such a life as his. There are mental and moral conflicts, as well as physical; and the former, in point of dignity, as much excel the latter, as they perhaps fall short of them in picturesque effect.

The language applied to Bishop Horne, by his friend and biographer, Jones of Nayland, is well worth remembering, as a noble tribute to the calling of the Christian Scholar; and it is surely no less applicable to the Author of the *Analogy*, than it was to him of whom it was originally written.

Of Dr. Butler, it may, with peculiar force and propriety be said—“He was no circumnavigator: he neither sailed with Drake, Anson, nor Cooke: but he was a man whose mind surveyed the intellectual world, and brought home from thence many excellent observations for the benefit of his native country. He was no military commander; he took no cities; he conquered no countries; but he spent his life in subduing his passions, and in teaching us how to do the same. He fought no battles by land or by sea; but he opposed the enemies of God and His Truth, and obtained some victories which are worthy to be recorded. He was no prime minister to any earthly potentate; but he was a minister to the King of heaven and earth; an office at least as useful to mankind, and in the administration of which no minister to an earthly king ever exceeded him in zeal and fidelity. He made no splendid discoveries in natural history; but he did what was far better: he applied universal nature to the improvement of the mind, and the illustration of heavenly doctrines. I call these, *events*; but such as are little celebrated and of great signification.”

NOTE.—It may be right to mention, that this article was originally written as part of the materials for a new edition of “The Works of Bishop Butler;” of which a fuller notice appeared in the editorial column of the *New York Churchman*, May 20th, 1848.